

West Virginia Pharmacy Cost Management Council
Meeting Minutes
May 20, 2004 at 1:00 p.m.
Ramada Inn and Conference Center, 20 Scott Avenue
Morgantown, West Virginia 26508

Members Present:

Tom Susman, Co-Chair
Shana Phares, Co-Chair
Ann Stottlemeyer
Peggy King
Felice Joseph
Heather Bresch
Dr. Wayne Spiggle
Kevin Outterson
Charles L. Burdette

Absent:

Phil Shimer
Nancy Atkins
Stephen Neal

Others Present:

See Attached Register

Mr. Susman called the meeting to order. Members of the Council were given copies of the April 20, 2004 and May 6, 2004 minutes. Kevin Outterson made a motion that the minutes of the April 20, 2004 meeting be approved; Peggy King seconded; unanimously voted to approve. Laddie Burdette made a motion that the minutes of the May 6, 2004 meeting be approved; Heather Bresch seconded; unanimously voted to approve.

Mr. Susman distributed a listing of four questions that the Select Committee C on Pharmaceutical Availability and Affordability has asked the Council to answer during the course of the study they have undertaken.

Dr. Wayne Spiggle provided members of the Council with a concept paper "*Workgroup on Prescription Medication Access for Needy Patients in WV*". This workgroup was initially convened by the West Virginia State Medical Association (WVSMA) and is now joined by the WV Academy of Family Practice, the WV Association of Free Clinics, the Bureau of Senior Services, the Commission on Primary Care, the WV Department of Health and Human Resources, the West Virginia Directors of Senior and Community Services (WVDSCS) and representatives from the Hospital Association, Federally Qualified Health Centers and others to address the need for better access to prescription drugs for needy patients in West Virginia.

Dr. Spiggle then introduced Brenda Wilmoth, Executive Director, Barbour County Senior Center, Inc., Linda Shriver, Preston-Taylor Community Health Centers and Susan Walter, Director, Regional Health Resource Center who all gave presentations on the

Prescription Assistance Program (PAP) and the problems their elderly patients face while trying to access these programs and the multiple applications that must be completed for each pharmaceutical company. Ms. Wilmoth provided a copy of case studies for the Barbour County Family Resource Network and Susan Walter provided a copy of the Pharmacy Assistance Program process that is used by the Regional Health Resource Center (RHRC), which outlines the complicated and lengthy process they must follow in order to obtain medications. She stated that the process needed to be more streamlined so that people stay well and get the prescriptions that doctors prescribe. At the conclusion of their presentations, Brenda, Linda and Susan answered questions from the Council.

Following the presentation on prescription assistance programs, Phil Schenk, Division of Primary Care, Bureau for Public Health, Department of Health and Human Resources and Brian Cunningham, Assistant Director, West Virginia Primary Care Association distributed a handout and gave a slide presentation entitled "*340b Drug Program Initiative*". This program was created in 1992 by the Public Health Service (PHS) section 340b, hence the name. Participation is limited to certain federal grantees and these entities may purchase drugs at significantly reduced prices and pass the savings on to uninsured patients. On the average nationally, 340b prices are estimated to be 51% lower than the annual wholesale price; 39% lower than the average manufacturers price, 19% lower than the Medicaid net price and 15-20% lower than Canadian drug prices. Plans are underway to increase the number of participants by increasing the number of FQHC sites and working with the West Virginia Hospital Association and the Secretary's (Department of Health and Human Resources) 340b Council to increase DSH participation. During and following the presentation both Mr. Schenk and Mr. Cunningham answered questions.

After a short break, Ann Stottlemeyer, Commissioner, Bureau of Senior Services took a few minutes to introduce Joni Constante the Director of Morgantown Health Right, who was in the audience. Joni stated that Morgantown Health Right works closely with primary care centers and they can often provide medications for patients that primary care centers aren't able to provide. She explained that short-dated medications are drugs that come from manufacturers and most are six months from expiration.

Ann went on to explain that the Golden Mountaineer Discount Card program was started in September 2001 and since its inception has consistently served the same number of people. There are about 90,000 seniors who have not signed up and are still without drug coverage. This may be due in some part to the fact that some pharmacists are not encouraging seniors to use the card, which provides a 19% discount from the usual and customary price. This discount comes out of the pocket of the pharmacies - not the manufacturer. The program provides discounts on 21 drugs--11 of which are birth control pills. The plan was for more of the discount to come from manufacturers but about this time Medicare started talking about their discount program and many manufacturers opted to participate in this instead, plus the Medicare discount is significantly better than what Golden

Mountaineer can offer. The card is free to anyone who is 60 years-of-age regardless of their income, and the card will continue for at least one more year.

Ann then introduced Linda Calvert who is the Director of the Senior Health Insurance Network (SHINE). Linda distributed numerous handouts and gave a presentation about SHINE and the Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Cards.

SHINE is an information, counseling and assistance program for people with Medicare when they need help understanding Medicare coverage and medical bills or assistance in making decisions about Medicare+Choice, Medicare Supplemental plans and other health insurance options. Individuals who have received special training in health insurance issues provide services at senior centers. There is no charge for any SHINE service and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has provided funding to the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services for SHINE activities.

Linda went on to explain about the new Medicare Discount Cards which came about as a result of a new law that gives people with Medicare the power to start saving on prescription drugs right now. Medicare is contracting with private companies to offer Medicare-approved drug discount cards. Those with lower incomes (\$12,659 for a single person; \$16,862 for a married couple) may also qualify for a \$600 credit on the Medicare-approved drug discount card they choose. Linda covered such topics as enrollment, who can get one of these discount cards, when can you get a card, which prescription drug discount cards are available in West Virginia and costs to enroll. Following the presentation Linda answered questions from the Council.

Mr. Susman announced a brief adjournment for the Council to have a dinner break and reminded those in attendance to be sure and sign up at the registration desk if they wish to speak at the public hearing, which will begin at 7:15 immediately following the presentation on RxforWV.

When the meeting reconvened a packet of information on RxforWV was handed out and Mr. Susman introduced Philip A. Reale who was appearing on behalf of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association of America (PhRMA) to discuss RxforWV, the prescription drug clearinghouse for West Virginia which House Bill 4084, The Pharmaceutical Availability and Affordability Act of 2004, required them to develop. Mr. Reale reviewed the statutory framework within which the clearinghouse was to be constructed and what it was designed to achieve. He then introduced Christian Clymer of PhRMA who followed with an explanation of the technology that drives the program in the sense of website and call center operations.

Mr. Clymer explained that there are other programs in existence to help patients find assistance, but that RxforWV has several features that help distinguish it from other

programs. RxforWV tries to strike a balance between other programs that either don't match patients with programs by screening their eligibility requirements or require an exhaustive amount of information that can frustrate patients and health care providers. By asking 10 questions, they learn enough about a patient to find the best programs without asking them to spend a long amount of time researching personal information and completing a long questionnaire. Mr. Clymer went on to say that they are putting together a plan to allow patients, caregivers, caseworkers and health care professionals to save patient information on the site without compromising confidentiality or violating HIPAA laws. They are also working on a system that would allow a patient to enter a brand name or generic name of a drug to get all programs associated with that compound and finally they are hoping to include some one-click search abilities that would allow a patient or provider to find all programs associated with a drug, therapeutic class or company with one click of the mouse.

George Manahan who is the Advertising Outreach Coordinator for RxforWV updated Council members on the marketing outreach activities they are using to promote the website and clearinghouse to those individuals who qualify for prescription drugs. He stated that there's going to be a fairly aggressive media campaign in the next 8 weeks to get the word out so they can make certain that people who can benefit from this program will know about it. Consumers with a household income up to 200% of the federal poverty level are the target audience for RxforWV. There is also free telephone assistance through the call center (1-877-982-7948) for those who do not have computer access or who need help navigating the website. Mr. Manahan also shared a video of two upcoming commercials that will be aired as well as two personal testimonials from providers who have used the system. Following the presentation Mr. Susman opened the floor for questions from the Council.

Immediately following the RxforWV presentation Mr. Susman officially opened the Public Hearing. Those choosing to speak included: Bill Davis, AARP; Chris Chapman of Morgantown; Steve Becker of Vitality Science in Fairmont; Tricia Wolfe of Associated Charities in Cumberland, Maryland; Michelle Grabenstein of Tri-State Community Health Center in Lavale, Maryland; Sid Murphy of Preston County Senior Citizens, Inc. and Frank Shannon.

Mr. Susman then announced that the next meeting of the WV Pharmaceutical Cost Management Council would be held in Charleston on June 3, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. in the Senate Finance Room (not confirmed). Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.